investigation for limestone in Siju block of Assam and sillimanite in Sonapahar block of Meghalaya State, and Rs. 94 lakhs was provided by Deptt. of Coal for exploration for coal in Namchik Extension Block in Arunachal Pradesh.

Pension for the Employees/Officers of SECL

†2845. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employees/officers working in S.E.C.L. (situated in Madhya Pradesh) have no guarantee to receive pension even after the deductions made from their salaries;

(b) if so, how the crores of rupees deducted from employees salary and deposited with Coal Mines Provident Fund which is in Government account, is being utilized; and

(c) what is the number of those officers/employees who are receiving pension after retirement and the number of those who are not receiving such pensions or are receiving pension payment irregularly ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR. (SMT.) RITA VERMA] : (a) The officers and employees of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (S.E.C.L.) who are eligible members of the Coal Mines Pension Scheme, 1998 are all entitled to get the benefits as admissible under said Scheme.

(b) The Pension Fund is managed by the Coal Mines Provident Fund Organisation (CMPFO) as per investment guidelines issued by the Government of India from time to time.

(c) There are 5408 persons in SECL eligible for pension as on 31-3-2000. As reported by CMPFO, 672 persons as on 31-3-2000 are regularly getting pension in SECL. Claims of remaining eligible persons are under various stages of processing.

Exploration of Gold and Diamonds by MNCs

2846. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of multinational companies permitted to explore and mining of gold and diamonds in the country; and

(b) the progress made by them in their exploration so far ?

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† Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR. (SMT.) RITA VERMA] : (a) Under Section 5(1) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, only an Indian national or a company as defined in sub-section (1) of Section (3) of the Companies Act, 1956 can be granted a prospecting licence or minig lease for exploration or mining of minerals including gold and diamonds. As such, under the existing scheme of the mining legislation, a foreign company is not allowed to undertake prospecting/mining operations.

(b) Does not arise.

Coal Consumption in Thermal Power Stations of GSEB

2847. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) the annual consumption of coal in thermal power stations of Gujarat State Electricity Board, district-wise;

(b) the quantum of coal supplied to these power stations during the last three years till date;

(c) the shortage of coal supplied; and

(d) the steps taken to supply the required quantity of coal ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR. (SMT.) RITA VERMA] : (a) The annual consumption of coal in Thermal Power Stations of Gujarat State Electricity Board (GSEB) for the last three years is as under :—

(Figures in '000 tonnes)

(Data provisional)

Power Stations	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Wanakbori	5715	6030	7162
Gandhinagar	2406	3351	2950
Ukai	3444	3128	3112
Sikka	933	653	592
TOTAL	**12498**	**13162**	**13816**

(Source : Central Electricity Authority)